

An act to amend Section 68502.5 of the Government Code, relating to
courts.

SECURED
COPY

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 68502.5 of the Government Code is amended to read:

68502.5. (a) The Judicial Council may, as part of its trial court budget process, seek input from groups and individuals as it deems ~~appropriate~~ appropriate, including, but not limited to, advisory committees and the Administrative Director of the Courts. The trial court budget process may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- (1) The receipt of budget requests from the trial courts.
- (2) The review of the trial courts' budget requests and evaluate them against performance criteria established by the Judicial Council by which a court's performance, level of coordination, and efficiency can be measured.
- (3) The annual adoption of the projected cost in the subsequent fiscal year of court operations as defined in Section 77003 for each trial court. This estimation shall serve as a basis for recommended court budgets, which shall be developed for comparison purposes and to delineate funding responsibilities.
- (4) The annual approval of a schedule for the allocation of moneys to individual courts and an overall trial court budget for forwarding to the Governor for inclusion in the Governor's proposed State Budget. The schedule shall be based on the performance criteria established pursuant to paragraph (2), on a minimum standard established by the Judicial Council for the operation and staffing of all trial court operations, and on any other factors as determined by the Judicial Council. This minimum standard shall be modeled on court operations using all reasonable and available measures to increase court efficiency. The schedule of allocations shall assure that all trial courts receive funding for the minimum operating and staffing standards

before funding operating and staffing requests above the minimum standards, and shall include incentives and rewards for any trial court's implementation of efficiencies and cost saving measures.

(5) The reallocation of funds during the course of the fiscal year to ensure equal access to the trial courts by the public, to improve trial court operations, and to meet trial court emergencies. Neither the state nor the counties shall have any obligation to replace moneys appropriated for trial courts and reallocated pursuant to this paragraph.

(6) The allocation of funds in the State Trial Court Improvement and Modernization Fund to ensure equal access to trial courts by the public, to improve trial court operations, and to meet trial court emergencies, as expressly authorized by statute.

(7) Upon approval of the trial courts' budget by the Legislature, the preparation during the course of the fiscal year of allocation schedules for payments to the trial courts, consistent with Section 68085, which shall be submitted to the Controller's office at least 15 days before the due date of any allocation.

(8) The establishment of rules regarding a court's authority to transfer trial court funding moneys from one functional category to another in order to address needs in any functional category.

(9) At the request of the presiding judge of a trial court, an independent review of the funding level of the court to determine whether it is adequate to enable the court to discharge its statutory and constitutional responsibilities.

(10) From time to time, a review of the level of fees charged by the courts for various services and prepare recommended adjustments for forwarding to the Legislature.

(11) Provisions set forth in rules adopted pursuant to Section ~~77206~~ of the Government Code. 77206.

(b) Courts and counties shall establish procedures to allow for the sharing of information as it relates to approved budget proposals and expenditures that impact the respective court and county budgets. The procedures shall include, upon the request of a court or county, that a respective court or county shall provide the requesting court or county a copy of its approved budget and, to the extent possible, approved program expenditure component information and a description of budget changes that are anticipated to have an impact on the requesting court or county. The Judicial Council shall provide to the Legislature on December 31, 2001, and yearly thereafter, budget expenditure data at the program component level for each court.

(c) (1) The Judicial Council shall retain the ultimate responsibility to adopt a budget and allocate funding for the trial courts and perform the other activities listed in subdivision (a) that best assure their ability to carry out their functions, promote implementation of statewide policies, and promote the immediate implementation of efficiencies and cost saving measures in court operations, in order to guarantee equal access to the courts.

(2) (A) When setting the allocations for trial courts, the Judicial Council shall set a preliminary allocation in July of each fiscal year. The preliminary allocation shall include an estimate of available trial court reserves as of June 30 of the prior fiscal

year and each court's preliminary allocation shall be offset by the amount of reserves in excess of the amount authorized to be carried over pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 77203. In January of each fiscal year, after review of available trial court reserves as of June 30 of the prior fiscal year, the Judicial Council shall finalize allocations to trial courts and each court's finalized allocation shall be offset by the amount of reserves in excess of the amount authorized to be carried over pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 77203.

~~(B) Upon preliminary determination of the allocations to trial courts pursuant to subparagraph (A), the Judicial Council shall set aside 2 percent of the total funds appropriated in Program 45.10 of Item 0250-101-0932 of the annual Budget Act and these funds shall remain in the Trial Court Trust Fund. These funds shall be administered by the Judicial Council and be allocated to trial courts for unforeseen emergencies, unanticipated expenses for existing programs, or unavoidable funding shortfalls. Unavoidable funding shortfall requests for up to 1.5 percent of these funds shall be submitted by the trial courts to the Judicial Council no later than October 1 of each year. The Judicial Council shall, by October 31 of each year, review and evaluate all requests submitted, select trial courts to receive funds, and notify those selected trial courts. By March 15 of each year, the Judicial Council shall distribute the remaining funds if there has been a request from a trial court for unforeseen emergencies or unanticipated expenses that has been reviewed, evaluated, and approved. Any unexpended funds shall be distributed to the trial courts on a prorated basis.~~

~~(C) The Judicial Council shall, no later than April 15 of each year, report to the Legislature, pursuant to Section 9795 of the Government Code, and to the Department of Finance all requests and allocations made pursuant to subparagraph (B).~~

(B) The Judicial Council shall hold a reserve of ten million dollars (\$10,000,000) in the Trial Court Trust Fund to be available to trial courts for emergencies. The funding shall be administered by the Judicial Council, and any funding allocated shall be replenished on an annual basis from the trial court base allocations. The Judicial Council shall establish a process for trial courts to apply for emergency funding.

(C) The Judicial Council shall, no later than October 1 of each year, report to the Legislature, pursuant to Section 9795, and to the Department of Finance all requests and allocations made pursuant to subparagraph (B) for the preceding year.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

Bill No.

as introduced, _____.

General Subject: Courts: trial court funding.

Existing law requires the Judicial Council to adopt a budget and allocate funding for the trial courts. Existing law requires the Judicial Council to set aside 2% of specified funds appropriated in the annual Budget Act and requires the funds to remain in the Trial Court Trust Fund to be allocated by the Judicial Council to trial courts for unforeseen emergencies, unanticipated expenses, or unavoidable funding shortfalls.

This bill would instead require the Judicial Council to hold a reserve of \$10,000,000 in the Trial Court Trust Fund to be available to trial courts for emergencies. The bill would require any funding allocated to be replenished on an annual basis from the trial court base allocations. The bill would require the Judicial Council to establish a process for trial courts to apply for emergency funding.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: no.